

REMARKS

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make editorial changes thereto and generally improve the form thereof, and a substitute specification and abstract are provided. No new matter has been added by the substitute specification and abstract.

Claims 1-7 have been cancelled and claims 8-28 have been added.

The instant invention pertains to an encoder-equipped sealing device including a first seal element, a second seal element, an elastic seal portion on the first seal element, and a magnet-based encoder on the second seal element. Such an encoder-equipped sealing device is generally known in the art, but suffers from a drawback when plural such encoder-equipped sealing devices are stored within a magazine. Specifically, the magnet-based encoder of one of these devices produces a strong magnetic force that attracts a seal element of an adjacent one of these devices. This magnetic adhesion makes it difficult to remove one of these devices from the magazine. Applicant has addressed and resolved this drawback by designing a unique encoder-equipped sealing device.

In this regard, with regard to Figures 1 or 2, for example, the inventive encoder-equipped sealing device includes a projecting portion 4a or 4b. Provision of such a projecting portion limits adhesion of adjacent encoder-equipped sealing devices resulting from the magnetic force produced by the magnet-based encoder. Thus, when stored in a magazine, the encoder-equipped sealing devices can easily be removed therefrom. New claims 8-28 are believed to be representative of Applicant's inventive encoder-equipped sealing device.

Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hajzler. Hajzler is not believed to be applicable with regard to the currently pending claims for the following reasons.

Claims 8 and 15 require that the projecting portion is "non-flat". By having the projecting portion be non-flat, an area of contact between the magnet-based encoder and a flange portion of adjacent devices can be maintained as small as possible, whereby magnetic adhesion can be reduced to a minimal amount so as to ensure that the sealing devices can be easily removed from a magazine.

In Hajzler, the portion of the seal element that the Examiner has equated to the claimed projecting portion is shown to be flat or planar, whereby an area of contact with encoder element 4 of an adjacent device is not minimized such that magnetic adhesion is not minimized, and accordingly, removal from a magazine cannot be made to be as easily as possible. Thus, independent claims 8 and 15 are not anticipated by Hajzler, whereby claims 8-21 are allowable.

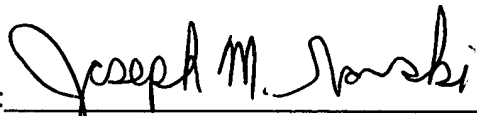
Additionally, with regard to independent claims 15 and 22, these claims require that the elastic seal portion and the projecting portion "are not positioned at the same level". This is shown in Figures 1 and 2, for example, wherein seal element 6 is shown to be at a level beneath the level at which the projecting portion 4a or 4b is located. As is clear from Hajzler, elastomer coating or seal portion 10 exists along an entire inner surface of disk 8, whereby this seal portion is at the same level as that portion of disk 8 that has been equated to the projecting portion. Thus, independent claims 15 and 22 are not anticipated by Hajzler, whereby claims 15-28 are allowable.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance and an early Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If after reviewing this Amendment, the Examiner believes that any issues remain which must be resolved before the application can be passed to issue, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicant's undersigned representative by telephone to resolve such issues.

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